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Critical Note

Ā AS AN OLD PLURAL ENDING OF THE HEBREW FEMININE NOUN

A close relationship exists between the Semitic noun and the Semitic verb. Without entering into the question of priority the connection between both is unmistakable. The masculine noun singular has no special sign, nor has the third masculine singular perfect¹ and imperfect.² The *t* is feminine sign of both, of the singular noun as well as of the third singular perfect and imperfect. The masculine plural ending *u* serves as such for the verb perfect and imperfect and also for the noun.³ And the Aramaic plural ending of the feminine noun *ān* finds its counterpart in the ending of *ān* of third plural feminine imperfect as well as in the ending *ān* of third plural feminine perfect in the Jerusalem Talmud and the Targumim.

The biblical Aramaic has for third plural feminine perfect the ending *ā* (Dan. 5:5; 7:8, 20; so frequently also the Targumim) like the Ethiopic and Assyrian in all tempora and imperative. This ending is now known to have been preserved also in Hebrew in the perfect⁴ and the imperative⁵ and perhaps also in the imperfect if the Ketib in Ezek. 23:43 should be considered as a sufficient proof for it.⁶ This phenomenon in the case of the *verb* would then, according to our observation about the relationship between the verb and the noun, justify us to look for it also in the plural feminine *noun*.

¹ Cf. Brockelmann, *Vergl. Gram.*, I, § 262 a (p. 571), against Schultze, *Zur Formenlehre des sem. Verbs*, p. 12.

² Cf. *op. cit.*, § 260 Ca (p. 564).

³ Also in Hebrew, cf. Seidel, "The *ā* as an Old Plural Ending of the Hebrew Noun," *JAOS*, XXXVII, 165; to the instances cited there add II Chron. 32:21: רמיציאי מעיר Qerē: רמיציאי.

⁴ First pointed out by Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, XXXVIII, 411, footnote, and then by Lambert in a brochure: *une série de Qere Ketib*, Paris, 1891. To the instances enumerated by them, cf. *G.-K.*, § 44 o; cf. also Seidel: "חקרי לשון" in the Hebrew magazine *התרבות הישראלית*, Jerusalem, 1913, pp. 69 ff., where are added Num. 34:4; Josh. 17:18; Zach. 14; Ezek. 16:49 (רזיה); in the last instance, however, רזיה may refer to the preceding נאון (add Exod. 30:4, so the versions, seven manuscripts, and Samar.); Isa. 13:25 (ענר); Jer. 51:29 (קמה); and perhaps also Isa. 66:18 (באה) (cf., however, Jer. 4:14 [?]; Prov. 15:22; 20:18); Ezek. 23:29 (רננה); Mic. 1:19 (באה [?]); Hab. 3:17 (עשר); Zech. 9:2 (חכמה); so also LXX). Add also, in accordance with several versions, Ezek. 16:49 (החזיקה).

⁵ Isa. 32:11; cf. *RDK*, Luzzatto, *ad. loc.*; Steinberg משפטי האורים, s.v. ערה; Marti, *ad loc.*; Barth. *ZDMG*, LVI, 247; *G.-K.*, § 48 i.

⁶ Cf. also, Gen. 47:24: וארבע הידות יהיה לכם, and Exod. 28:7: שתי כתפת יהיה לו. יהיה = הברת יהיה לו.

For the origin of this ending two theories may be advanced: either that *ā* was the original feminine plural ending (just as in the verb) and the *t* of the feminine plural ending *āt* is a later addition (by analogy of feminine singular (cf. *G.-K.*, § 87 *l*) after *ā* had lost its force as feminine plural ending), or it is a later form that arose by dropping the *t* of the original feminine plural ending *āt*.⁵ Its relation to Aramaic plural ending *ā* in absolute status is probably the same as that of third feminine plural *ā* (see above) to the Aramaic third feminine plural *ān*.

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⁵ The ending *dt* is also still preserved in Hebrew: Ps. 119:103: **מִהַּ נִמְלְצוּ לַחֲכִי**; **אֲמַרְתָּהּ**; *ibid.* 9:15: **כִּלְמֵעַן אֲסַפְרָה כָּל תִּהְלֶתֶיךָ**; Isa. 47:13: **בְּרֹב עֲצָתְךָ** (in the last instances with *ṣ* as after *dt*); so is perhaps also Nah. 3:3: **וַאֲיוֹן קֶצֶה לְגִיָּה וְשִׁלּוֹ**; and Isa. 26:19: **נִבְלַתִּי יְקִימוּן** is commented by Raši, **בְּגִיּוֹתָם, לְגִיּוֹתָם**; so comments also Luzzatto here as well as *ibid.* verse 20: **לְחַיֵּי עַמּוֹ . . . הֵם יְקִימוּ**; **וְסִימָן דְּלִיתָהּ בְּעֶדֶן**, in both cases expressly referring to the Aramaic fem. plur. ending *dt*.